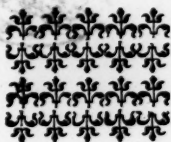


A
PIOUS SERMON,
preached by that late painfull
and profitable Minister
of Gods word
HUMPH. MUNNING,
*Rector of BRETENHAM in the
Countie of Suffolk.*



CAMBRIDGE,
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To
M^r WILLIAM COPINGER, Esquire;
and
M^{rs} MARY COPINGER,
his beloved wife.

Worshipfull, my loving and very good friends
in the Lord:



When I had preached this Sermon, some of ill will, I think, to draw me into the jealousie and danger of the time, reported that I had meddled (I know not how) with the ceremonies of the Church. A very strange thing, that meat, drink, apparell and pastime (for these are the indifferent things that I meddle withall) should sound in any wise mans eare, as the ceremonies of the Church. But such hearers we must sometimes meet withall, who will offer like violence to our words and meaning, as Cacus did to Hercules his oxen. Wherefore being provoked by this wrong, I took a little pains to look over my notes again, and setting my memory a work with them, I wrote out the Sermon wholly and at large as here it is. Which when I had done, I saw nothing to the contrary therein (though I confesse no great matter is to be seen in it) but that to some good minds (especially if friendly and lovingly disposed towards

the poore and contemptible authour) it might be of some good use unto true godlinesse in this kind. And peradventure the presumption of putting it into the hands of some such persons, might be as little sinne, as the casting of it aside into some dusty corner with other waste papers. Wherefore your selves being of such deserving towards me, as if there were any thing of worth in me, I must of necessity ow it to you; I am bold to put these papers (such as they are) into your loving hands: where if they do no other good, yet they shall testifie my thankfulness towards you, and be ready to clear my innocencie in that supposed crime, when need requires.

God give you both, with a happy and blessed new yeare, all renewments of his grace and holy Spirit, to his glory in you, and your endlesse comfort in him.

Bretenham, January, 1.

1619.

Yours, with his best

and best deserved affections,

HUM. MUNNING.



I. COR. 10.

Verf. 31. *Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

32. *Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God:*

33. *Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.*



O discern things that differ (as the Apostle speaketh, Phil. 1. 10.) is a necessarie grace in a Christian, and requireth true wisdom indeed. But I am deceived, if the wisdom and perspicency of a Christian be not of as necessary use, and as much to be required in indifferent things as in those that differ. For in these things of a middle and indifferent nature, where we have no direct nor expresse commandment of God to over-rule us, but are left (after a sort) to the libertie of our will: here we do commonly ** either go too slow, or too fast*: here zeal without knowledge, or knowledge without zeal, doth dangerously miscarry us: here Satan, taking advantage either of our ignorance or of some other corruption within us, doth set his traps for us; yea, here he makes one Christian set a trap for another: here, for the most part, we are ** boasters of our liberty*, carrying our selves too strongly upon it, and see not that we are snared in it, and how Satan makes nets of indifferent things, wherein we are

* Aut hæsitare, aut precipitare.

* Jactatores libertatis.

easily taken, and hardly escape without some losse or hurt to our selves or others. Into this net, or toil, the devil had got the Christian Corinthians, where with the over-free use of indifferent things, namely of *meats sacrificed to idoles*, they did gore and wound the consciences one of another. The Apostle therefore seeing their danger, and in theirs foreseeing ours, doth take great pains to deliver them and us out of these briers; so great, as in no other point that I know, except the main of our *justification by faith*, he hath taken any greater: giving unto the Corinthians, and in them unto us, with other instructions of like nature, certain generall rules, whereby a wise and good Christian may walk safely in these things: neither to scrupulously tying up himself and others from the use of them altogether; nor yet loosely and dissolutely abusing his libertie in them, as an occasion to the flesh.

Of these generall rules this that I have read unto you is one, and the principall: it is the conclusion of the whole discourse or disputation about indifferent things; from the beginning of the eighth chapter. And it seemeth to me that the Apostle setteth it down by way of *anticipation*, thus: The Christian Corinthians, upon occasion of that which the Apostle had urged before, might reply and say, Why, Sir, if there be such danger in eating and drinking, feasting and companie-keeping with our friends, and other things of this nature, that (as you say) God is provoked, and our souls endangered thereby; what shall we do? we had best utterly abstain, and throw away our libertie that we seem to have in these things, for ever. To this reply of theirs the Apostle rejoyneth in these words.

Nay,

Nay, (saith he) I say not so unto you: but if you will take it, I will give you a safe and sure rule to walk by in these and all other like things. And that is this; *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God, and to the edification of your brethren.* You are wise men and full of knowledge; use your wisdom in the practise of this rule, consider the circumstances and especially the end of all your actions, and do thereafter.

So we have here a Rule, or (as the Apostle calleth it Gal. 6.16.) a *Canon* for a Christian to walk by in all his actions. And indeed it should be the Rule of all rules, and the Canon of all canons, to rule and overrule all that a Christian doth in all things, and even in those wherein he may seem to himself to be most at liberty, even in things of a middle and indifferent nature.

And here we have three things to consider of. First, the *actions* or *things* that are to be ruled. Secondly, the *rule* it *self*, whereby they are to be ruled. And thirdly an *example*.

The actions or things to be ruled are set down by a distribution: *Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do.* The Apostle doth instance in eating and drinking, because they were the things in question at that time. And yet lest we should think the rule to appertain onely to eating and drinking, he addeth the generall, *Whatsoever else*; to teach us that all our actions must fall under a rule.

The rule whereby these things are to be ruled, is the end. And that is double: first, *the glory of God*; secondly, *the edification of our neighbour*. The first is
set

set down in plain and expresse terms; *Do all to the glory of God.* The second is set down by a remotion of the contrary; *Give no offence,* cause none to fall or to stumble, no *Jew*, no *Grecian*, much lesse any of the people and *Church of God.*

The example is taken from himself: *As in all things I please all men.* In all things of this nature, in all indifferent things, I do not so much respect mine own liberty or commodity, as how the action will fall out to others; not using my liberty or power in any thing, but where I may further the salvation of others thereby.

Now (to take these things as they ly in order) first concerning the actions or things to be ruled, they are (as we see) specially eating and drinking, but in generall all things whatsoever. For so the Apostle, *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do.* From which generall words of the Apostle this generall doctrine doth arise unto us, namely, That all things whatsoever a Christian man doth, must be done by a rule. And a Christian hath no such liberty, to do what he list, at least, to do as he list in any thing. Though God hath given us great liberty in many things; yet no such liberty, as to be irregular or out of rule in any thing.

And the Scripture saith the same thing in other places, though in other terms. For that same integrity that God requireth of Abraham, *to walk before him and be upright*, the *undefilednesse in the wayes of the Lord*, that David speaketh of in the Psalmes, the *sinceritie* and *unblameablenesse* that the Apostles exhort unto otherwhere, *Walking honestly and pleasing God in all things*; what is all this, I say, but the obser-

observing of a rule in all things that we do, as the Apostle here requireth.

And the best interpreters upon this place affirm so much.

* One saith, *This ought to be the scope of all our actions.* * Another saith, *Let this rule be observed in all things.* And * a third saith, *No part of mans life, no action* TAM MINUTA, *not such a minute, not such a minute of an action in a Christian, but must be referred to this end.* * Piscator.
* Hemming
* Marlorat.

The generall will the better appear, if it be laid open in some particulars. And first in this wherein the Apostle instanceth; *Whether ye eat or drink.* What is more free, or wherein hath God given more liberty to man, then in eating and drinking? *Every moving thing that liveth* (saith God Gen. 9. 3.) *shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.* And Deut. 12. 20. *If thou shalt say, I will eat flesh (because thy soul longeth to eat flesh) thou mayest eat flesh whatsoever thy soul lusteth after.* And the Apostle telleth us, 1. Tim. 4. 4. *Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving.* And in this chapter, verse 25. *Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake.*

Behold here libertie enough! And blessed be God that (as Mr Calvin saith) *we need not eat our meat with a doubtfull and fearfull conscience.* And to teach otherwise, were a doctrine of devils.

What then? For all this libertie, might a Jew therefore, during the time of the Leviticall law, have eaten of swines flesh, or any other legally-unclean creature? No, you say, That was forbidden by the

B

Law,

Law, and therefore not indifferent. But I say, The thing was indifferent still in its own nature, and the prohibition of the law was but a restriction in the use for a time.

Or what shall we say to that temporary exception in the Apostles time? Might a believing Gentile during that time have eaten of things strangled or of bloud? or may we now abuse our libertie in eating and drinking (I do not say to surfetting and drunkenesse, but) to the breach of any honest and Godly politick law amongst us? Nay, we see that notwithstanding this great libertie in this matter, yet the Apostle doubteth not to give rules to our eating and drinking, and such rules as do both restrain and limit the outward act, and also in some sort do bind the conscience, and make a man guilty of sinne in the neglect of the same. So as notwithstanding our libertie in eating and drinking, yet we may not be libertines therein.

Let us see the like in apparell.

The fair, or (as Tremellius translateth) the desirable garments of Esau, the parti-coloured coat that Jacob made for his sonne Joseph, the changes of rayment that Joseph gave to his brethren, and the vestures of divers colours that the kings daughters wore being virgins; all these do declare what liberty God hath given unto us in the use of apparell. A liberty that seemed so great to that learned Father Augustine, that he giveth this Item or Caveat to Possidonius about this matter, I will not (saith he) that you be very forward in censuring or judging any for their garments or ornaments of gold. And experience doth teach us every day, that as much grace is to be found under a gay coat, as under a gray one.

Nolo ut de
ornamentis
auri, vel
vestis, pro-
peram ha-
beas in
prohiben-
do senten-
tiam.

And

And yet for all this, when the daughters and ladies of Jerusalem would keep no rule in their apparell, who knoweth not how sharply the Prophet rebuketh them? Yea the Princes themselves and the Kings children are threatned that God will punish them for being clothed with strange apparell. And the holy Apostles, giving rules of sobrietie in apparell to Christian women, do teach us that all our actions and fashions in this matter must go by a rule. And I think all good minds do mourn, to see how out of all rule men and women are now adayes in all callings and conditions. I say, in all; I except not that which should be an example of humilitie and Christian sobrietie to all the rest. Surely our pride doth testifie to our face, and we are too farre gone in affecting the mark of dignitie in our habits and apparell: which, besides our sinne against God and our Christian rule, is also, as one censureth it (and I think, truly) a note of *pufillanimitie* and *base debilitie* in our selves.

1/ai.3.

Zeph. 1.8.

And to touch that a little, wherein men are most irregular: even the recreation of a Christian (if any be at all) must be done by a rule. For if we must eat and drink by a rule, if we must apparell our selves by a rule: why must not our recreation be by a rule also? Certainly, when the Apostle saith, *WHATSOEVER ELSE YE DO, there is no remedie but play and pastime must be comprehended in this generall*, saith a great Divine.

Danzus,
de ludo
alea, cap. 1.

I know what warres men are at in their judgements about this matter of play and pastime: and I mean not to be a stickler between them at this time, further then my Text doth thrust me in whether I will or no; and that is thus farre. Certainly either play must not be

used by a Christian at all : or if it be, it must be done by a rule, yea by this rule, as all other things ought to be. And if any man think his pastime an action not serious enough to hold proportion with the glory of God, let him take heed how he meddle with it : for how dare a Christian divert or turn from this end in any thing that he doth ?

And thus farre we have seen the generalitie of this doctrine laid open in certain particulars. Now one or two things for the use of it.

use I. First, it condemneth the unrulinesse of these times, wherein men are become very libertines, though not in profession, yet in practise, and almost in profession too. The Apostle's *Omnia licent* every man taketh by the end : but his *Non expediunt* no man looketh after. Every man eateth, drinketh, playeth, apparelleth himself as he listeth, saith and doeth what he listeth, without any regard of God or his weak brother. And that which me thinketh is strange, all this irregularitie shrowdeth it self under the protection of Christian libertie.

Why I, you say, is it not a part of our Christian libertie, to use without scruple of conscience indifferent things ? I grant it is : but how ? to use them as we list our selves, without all regard to the glory of God, or the good of our brethren ? God forbid that any man should once dream, that Christ hath made such a purchase for us. To use them, there is our libertie ; and this libertie is rather in the conscience, then in the outward act : but to use them as we list our selves, without any regard to God and to our brethren ; this is more then libertie, more then Christian, yea

yea more then Civil. For even the Civilians themselves (if I be not deceived) do define their libertie thus, *Libertie* (say they) *is a naturall power, whereby a man doeth what he will, so farre as the laws do permit.* And so, *Christian liberty is a supernaturall power obtained by Christ, whereby a Christian doeth what he will, according to his Christian rule, or, according to the rule of Gods word.* We must therefore, by this doctrine, learn to abhorre that abuse of libertie, and unrulinesse, which we see to be afoot in these dayes, even amongst Christians themselves.

On the other side, this doctrine must teach us, for *Use. 2.* our part (whatsoever others do) to draw our selves under a rule, and to submit and subject our selves thereunto in all that we do. Every Christian is a builder: and every builder (we know) goeth by a rule: no mason, no carpenter works without his rule: and if he should, what manner of work would he make? The obedient and truly regular Rechabites did keep the rule of their father Jonadab: and not onely they shall rise up in judgement against us, if we will not keep the rule of the Apostle; but even their apes and counterfeits, the observers of the rules of Dominick and Francis, and the rest of them. For shall an hypocrite in a cowl observe the rule of one like unto himself, and shall not we observe the rule of him that hath made and redeemed us? For the rule of the Apostle is Christ's rule: and we may not nor cannot, without great and damnable disobedience, refuse it.

Well then, you say, if we must be tied to a rule, let us see what that rule is. That we shall see by and by. In the mean while understand that we must take heed

Nō vns
cōfigurā-
re ſeculo
iſti;
Rom. 12.2.

Arbitria
Judicium,
Reſponſa
prudētum

of thoſe crooked and perverſe rules that moſt men do follow. The example of the multitude, a fooliſh rule: you know how God forbids it unto us. The faſhion of the world, that is, of the time and age wherein we live; a dangerous rule: the Apoſtle gives us a great charge that we cut not out our converſation after the pattern thereof. The profits and pleaſures of this life ſeem golden rules to ſome: but indeed they are naughty rules, and the latter of them fitter for beaſts than for men. Nay, I go further, *the decrees of civil Judges*, and *maxims of wiſemen*, which the States-men and Politicians tell us are the grounds of all laws, and muſt over-rule all; yet even theſe are no ſufficient rules for a Chriſtian, no rules in conſcience: for theſe rules may be bent, and are bent oftentimes to ſerve the wills and pleaſures of men. But we muſt have ſuch a rule as may be without all exception and variation: a rule that muſt be, as ſome learned ſpeak in the terms of the Schools, *inobliquabilis & indeviabilis*: a rule that no good man dare, nor no wicked man can bend to his private affection.

Well then, what is this rule? The Apoſtle tells us, it is this, even *to do all to the glory of God, and the good of our neighbour*. This muſt be the continuall and perpetuall end of all our actions. And as in ſhooting a man takes his aim and levell from his mark: ſo a Chriſtian in doing muſt be ruled by this end.

Indeed not onely from the end or object is an action alwayes conſtrued to be good; the integrity or rectitude of other circumſtances muſt concur withall: but chiefly the end makes or marres all. And though a good end doth not wholly warrant an action to be good:

good : yet an ill end doth ever vitiate and corrupt it. As for example, What action can be better then that which now we are in hand with, namely, the hearing and speaking of the word of God? and yet (God be mercifull unto us) how fowly doth an ill end oftentimes corrupt it? If then we will have our actions sound and good indeed, we must take heed we do them to a good end; be sure of this, that the end be good.

This end, as the Apostle here propoundeth it, is double : one principall, and that is *the glory of God* ; the other secondary or subordinate, and that is *the edification of our brethren*.

First and principally do all to the glory of God. To this end our Saviour speaketh when he saith, *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorifie your Father which is in Heaven.* To this end David exhorteth the men of his time, *to give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name.* But I will not stand to heap up Scriptures to this purpose: let us see what the thing is which the Apostle calleth *the glory of God*. Matth. 5. 16.
Psal. 29. 2.

Glory is well defined by a heathen writer thus ; It is (saith he) *a frequent fame or good report of a man with praise* : By a Christian writer thus ; *It is praise increased, and abundantly published.* Then to do a thing to the glory of God, is to do it so, as from thence God may be much and honourably spoken of, the prayse of God may be increased and abundantly published. When the wisdom, the mercy, the justice, the goodness of God do shine in our actions, and we do them to this end ; then they are done to the glory of God. So by occasion of those works that our Saviour Christ did,

Frequens
de aliquo
fama cum
laude.
wilson dict.

Matth. 9. 8. did, the Evangelist saith, that the people *did glorifie God*, that is, did speak great and glorious things of God. And Paul, after his conversion and calling into the Ministry, did all things so as the people *did glorifie God in him, or for him*. So here, *Do all things to the glory of God*, that is, do all things so, as from every thing that you do men may take occasion to praise and magnifie the name of God.

This doing of things to the glory of God is the matter of the first petition in the Lords prayer, and of the third commandment in the Decalogue: from which two places they that will may fetch matter enough to this argument.

But so far as our failing in this rule ariseth not so much from our ignorance in the rule, as from our want of affection to the rule: let us therefore consider a little of some good and weighty reasons that may stirre and move us to the practise of it.

Prov. 16. 4. And first, let me reason from the end of our creation. *The Lord* (saith the Scripture) *hath made all things for himself*: that is, for his own glory. From hence I reason thus: That end which God respected in making of man, ought man to respect in all his actions: But God in making of man respected his own glory: Therefore the glory of God ought to be the end of all our actions. Else we shall divert and turn, not only our own actions, but also the very workmanship of God in us, to another end then he that made us meant and intended. Which if a man himself will account a great wrong in the work of his hands: how much more shall it be a sinne and presumption against the glorious and omnipotent Architect of all the world!

A second reason may be taken from the merit and deserving of God in our creation and all that he hath done for us. Glory, that is fame and renown, alwayes followeth merit and deserving; but all worthinesse and true deserving is in God. No man doth absolutely deserve any thing at the hands of another man; because every man is bound by some debt or dutie one to another. Onely God, who is the great and free-giving God, doth deserve at our hands: And therefore all glory is due unto him: and so due, that a learned and wittie Divine saith, we must acknowledge *all to him, and nothing to our selves*. And this the foure and twenty Elders (who are the common type of all the holy assemblies here upon earth) do teach us, when they fall down before him that sat on the throne, and cast their crowns before the throne, and give this reason thereof, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory: — for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created*. He that hath made all, and bestoweth freely and liberally all gifts of creation and preservation upon all: is he not worthy to have glory at the hands of all? It is the Apostle's reason in another place: *Glorifie God in your bodies and souls; for they are Gods*. And indeed, is it much for us to eat and drink to his glory, of whose liberalitie we have every bit of bread and every drop of drink that we have? Or is it much for us to appa-
rell our selves to his glory, without whom we have not so much as a fig-leaf to hide our nakednesse? It were infinite to follow this argument in all the particulars: I come therefore to a third reason, and that is this;

*Est fama
multorum
magnorumque
meritorum, Lic:*

*Ejus omnitem,
notam, no-
stram nul-
litatem,
Alfred.*

Rev. 4. 11.

*1. Cor. 6.
10.*

The example of all the best and most excellent servants of God in all ages doth provoke us hereunto : whose hearts have been so fired with the zeal of Gods glory, that, to the end they might promote that, they have utterly neglected themselves. David was even *devoured and eaten up* with it : Moses and Paul preferred it to their own *salvation* : the holy Martyrs gave their *lives*, and endured all *torments*, that God might be glorified by them. How miserable and wretched are we, and how nothing akinne to those holy servants of God, if we will not so much as bridle an inordinate desire, not abstain from a libertie or commoditie which we may spare well enough, not forgo a whit of our vain pleasures and delights of this life, for the honouring and glorifying of the name of our God ! Surely great reason there is, that we should admit of this rule, and willingly let the glory of God be the end of all our actions.

But (beloved brethren) is it thus with us? Give me leave to deal plainly and roundly in a matter of so great respect. Yet will I say nothing of open and notorious wicked persons, Atheists, Epicures, Drunkards, Whores, Thieves, Usurers, Cozeners, the Foxes and Wolves, the Horses and Mules, the Dogs and Swine of the time, who would rot and stink as they go, if they had not a reasonable soul in them, to keep them from putrefaction. The lives and actions of these are not in derogation of Gods glory, but in a mere opposition and contradiction to it. I come to others who seem to have some fear of God in them, and I hope have so too, and yet are in nothing studious of the glory of God as they should be. For tell me I pray you,

Quibus anima data
est profane,
ne putrescant. Cic.

you, Our immoderate purchases and bottomlesse covetousnesse, our heaping of livings and possessions one upon another, as the old giants are said to have heaped mountains one upon another; are these things to the glory of God? Is it glorious to God, that they who professe to be his children, should be shifters and carvers for themselves, lifting, heaving, and shoving for the world (as Mr Perkins saith) as if they had no Father in Heaven, nor no Divine providence to trust unto? and then for a cover of their worldlinesse do mock God, and say, O we must have a care, &c. Is it a glory to God that it shall be spoken and written of Turks, that they are honest, just, plain-dealing men, and true of their word: and we, who are the servants not of Mahomet but of Jesus Christ and of him are called Christians, dare not trust one another? The proud and loftie carriage of the rich, gaping over the heads of the poore; (as the Prophet speaketh,) and, on the other side, the rude and insolent behaviour of the poore, the vile rising up oftentimes against the honourable: is it to the glory of God? Come we to our meetings and merriments, our carnall rejoycings, our eating and drinking like Epicures, when we professe Christians: can God be glorified by such irreligious behaviour? Our babish and gawdy attire in our apparel, being sick of some phantasticall fashion to day, and full and weary of it to morrow, putting all workmen to their wits end to follow the oft-turning weathercock of our restlessse and unchangable phantasies: Our idle pastimes, not as a parenthesis to the period of our labours, but our labour a poore and short parenthesis to the large and long leaves of our pastimes:

Deus bone,
quæ sunt nostra
gaudia!
quæ sunt
nostra
prandia!
Curios
simulamus,
& Bacchanalia
vivimus, *Musc.*

zech. 33.
32.

Plantatio
Domini, ad
glorifican-
dum eum,
Isai. 61. 3.

Our unbrotherly contentions, filling all the Courts and Consistories in the kingdome, and setting every day awork such swarms of attorneys and advocates as we do: are these things indeed, think you, to the glory of God? And not to be infinite, though in a subject that will scarcely suffer me to find any end: Is it to the glory of God, that his great and Divine majestie should be dallied withall in his most holy word: that men shall call for sermons and erect exercises, with great shew of godlineesse; and when all comes to all, the Ministers and Preachers of the word shall be of no other use to a great many, but as minstrels and pipers are, for their delight and pleasure? as God saith to the Prophet, *Thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice* —: *for they heare thy words but they do them not.* Alas, these words of the Apostle, willing us to do all to the glory of God, do even shame and confound us. Our own glory is aloft, but the glory of God is under foot everywhere: and, as if there were no danger to be competitours and corivals with God in a thing so precious unto him, we de-vest him daily of his glory, to invest our selves. Well, let this Scripture a little school us, let us remember that if we be as we should be, we are his workmanship, formed and *planted by him to the praise of his glory.* And he is worthy of all our labour and endeavour that can be employed that way.

But I shall not reach my project, if I come not to the second part of the rule, namely the end of our actions in respect of our brethren. And that must be *to edifie them.* As God must be *glorified*, so our brethren must be *edified* in all that we do.

To

To edifie, is to build up. And all men are builders, but some men do build the wrong way. For even he that gives an offence to his brother, doth build him up some way: he destroyes him and pulls him down in goodnesse, but he builds him up and sets him forward in evil. Take heed, saith the Apostle, that you do not so build up one another, *Give no offence to any man.*

Scandalum
est ædifi-
catio ad
delictum;
Tertull.

There be two words about this matter, differing in sound, but in sense and use, I think, all one. *Scandall* is one, and *Offence* is the other.

Scandalum is properly and literally *tigillum*, the bridge of a trap, which is set for a mouse or such other creature: which as soon as the unhappy creature toucheth, the trap falls and the poore beast is taken. Spiritually and Metaphorically, a scandall is any word or act said or done by one man, which falls out to the hurt and destruction of another man in the case of conscience and religion.

Offendiculum, the word that the Apostle useth here, is a block or stone in a mans way, whereupon he stumblcth: either out of ignorance, as a blind man doth; or of weaknesse, as aged and infirm persons do. In religious use it is every occasion of sinne that one man gives to another, either by false doctrine or bad example. And this latter is often in the use of indifferent things. The poore, blind, ignorant, weak Christian goes on pretily well and cheerfully in the way of godlinesse, till he comes to such a block or trap: there he stumbles, there he is taken; either to his utter destruction, or to his great hindrance in the way to eternall life.

Such a stumbling-block was the eating of meats sa-

cristi-

crificed to idoles among the Corinthians. By which act, indiscreetly and uncharitably done of some, three sorts of men were offended.

First, the unbelieving Jews, seeing the Christians to eat of things offered to idoles, which they justly and by the law of God detested; they by this thought the worse of Christian religion, and were set the further off from it : as the Turks and Jews at this day are offended and set off from our religion by the idoles and images of the Papists.

Secondly, the Grecians, that is, the unconverted Gentiles, these were offended likewise, though not grieved. For they thought the better of their own heathenish and idolatrous religion, because the Christians did partake with them in their sacrifices, and so were hardened in their superstition.

Thirdly, weak Christians, ignorant as yet of the Christian libertie under the Gospel, and holding it in conscience a sinne to eat of such things, yet were drawn on by example of others to eat against their conscience, and so were made guilty of sinne.

Thus it was amongst the Corinthians in this matter of idolothytes, or things sacrificed to idoles: which, out of the case of scandall or offence might lawfully have been used of them; but, in the case of offence to a weak brother, was a sinne and offence against God also. And the like evil (as I think) falleth out amongst us at this day, by the daily abuse of our Christian libertie in other things. For,

First, the Papists seeing how loose and lawlesse we are in many things, they, though well enough pleased, yet are truly offended, thinking all our religion nothing

thing but a carnall liberty; and are ready upon every occasion to blaspheme and say, Behold the fruits of your Gospel! So they are utterly set off by this block.

Secondly, the carnall Protestants, usurers, proud and covetous persons, they are hardened in their sinnes by the example of our seeming best professours. Behold, say they, these that professe most are as deep in these things as we: they think to go to heaven for all this; and why should not we?

Thirdly, weak and ignorant Christians, who for the most part do not inwardly consider the nature of things, nor examine the reasons of their actions, but are carried wholly by example; they stumble and fall everywhere, thinking they may safely do as others do, yea though they do things whereof their conscience doth accuse and condemn them.

To remedie this great evil there is no way, but to listen to the counsel and look to this rule of the Apostle; *Give no offence*, set no traps, lay no blocks in any mans way. Let this be a part of your Christian rule, which God himself hath here conjoyned, and therefore must be observed with the respect of his own glory.

The doctrine of offences in this scandalizing and scandalized age, were necessary to be better known then it is. But every man cannot sail through a sea of so many and such intricate questions. At this time it shall be enough for me, to deliver unto you one point of doctrine, which (as I think) doth naturally and necessarily arise out of this Scripture. And that is this, That how lawfull soever a thing be in
it

it self, yet if I see that my using of it at this time, and in this manner, is like to be a snare, a trap, or a stumbling-block to my brother: that is, there is danger lest by this means my brother either fall away utterly from religion, or if not so, yet fall into some sinne for the present, which, for ought I know, may be deadly unto him: or if not so, yet the good opinion which he had of me, as of a Christian and fellow-member, is diminished; and so, whereas before he went the more cheerfully towards heaven for my company, he goeth now for this act of mine the more sadly and heavily: In this case, how lawfull soever the act be in it self, by all other laws of God and men; yet now by the law of charitie and by this rule of the Apostle, it becometh unlawfull to me, and I ought not to do it. I say, in all indifferent things which are in our own power, where our liberty is not justly restrained and limited by a superiour authoritie; there a Christian must walk by this rule, He must give no offence in any thing that he doth. But you will say, the action is lawfull; why then may I not do it? The Apostle telleth thee, thou must first see how it will fall out to thy brother: the issue or event may be evil to some weak brother, though the action be not ill in it self. I, but I will use my liberty, whatsoever becometh of my brother. I, but now walkest thou not charitably, saith the Apostle: destroy not him with thy meat, with thy pleasure, with thy pastime, with thy apparell, for whom Christ hath died. Charitie must ever over-rule our liberty, according to that of the Apostle, Gal. 5. 13. *Brethren, ye have been called unto libertie; onely use not libertie for an occasion to the flesh,*

Charitati
subjicienda
libertas.

flesh, but by love serve one another. Upon which words that excellent servant of God Mr Calvin hath a saying worthy to be written in letters of gold, or rather in the heart of every Christian. *Wheresoever* (saith he) *Charitie beareth rule, there men are servants one to another.*

Ubiunque
regnat cha-
ritas, illic
mutua est
servitus.

Now this doctrine being true as I make no question but it is; it doth first shew us how uncharitable most men are, who look no further then to themselves in any thing. So they may have their profits, their pleasures; let other men stand or stumble, sink or swim, they care not. This is no lesse sinne, then to destroy a brother. For though a brother perish not alwayes in this case, yet no thank to him by whom the block was laid.

Secondly, let this perswade good Christians to make conscience of this part of the rule, as well as of the former: to do all things, as to *the glory of God*, so to *the edification of our brethren*. And remember that that which was so dear and precious to Christ, cannot be vile to any true Christian. And to have a tender care of our brethren, especially of our weak brethren, who are Christ's *little ones*, is a sweet fruit of our love to Christ, and a sure token of his Spirit dwelling in us.

Thus we see what our Christian rule is: and let him that refuseth to submit himself to this rule, heare how a learned man and a great Divine censurcth him: *He dishonoureth God, he falleth* (in some sort) *from grace, and is made subject to the wrath of God, till he repent.*

Now to this rule the Apostle adjoyneth an example, even his own: *Even as I do in all things.* It were

D

worth

Deum i-
gnominia
afficit, gra-
tia excidit,
& reus fit
ira Divi-
nae, donec
resipuerit,
Hemming,
in locum.

worth our time and attendance (if time would suffer us any longer to attend) to see how wise, how charitable, how conscionable the Apostle was ever in all his carriage and behaviour towards others in this respect: alwayes binding himself to his own rule, and preferring the good of others before his own liberty or commoditie in every thing. But to end with the time, to what purpose serve examples, but to be followed? And if neither rule nor example will hold us to our Christian dutie; we must look for our reward with libertines and lawlesse hypocrites at the hands of a just and righteous God.

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FINIS.



